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GENUINE ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE, ROBBERIES,

TRIAL and EXECUTION,

OF

*William Cox,*

Who was executed at Tyburn, October the  
27th. 1773.

For stealing Bank Notes and Cash (the Property of Mr.  
JOHN KENDRICK) to the Amount of Four Hundred  
Pounds and upwards.

RELATING

A great Number of awful Robberies, and how his Father  
first taught him to thief: His many narrow Escapes  
and quick Inventions to evade the hand of Justice: His  
Behaviour in Newgate and at the Place of Execution.

*A Caution to the Public to be careful of their Property.*

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# A C C O U N T

## O F T H E

### L I F E and R O B B E R I E S

# O F

## W I L L I A M C O X,

**O**N the 10th, of September, 1773, WILLIAM Cox was indicted at the old Bailey, for stealing in the house of Mr. Dominique Carthelemi Delestras, in Oxford-street, on the 23d. of July, the following articles, being the property of Mr. John Kendrick, a dealer in horses, who lodged in the house of the above said Gentleman, viz. three bank notes of 100l. each, 136 guineas in money, a silver watch, value 3l. one silk purse, and one canvas bag. The substance of Mr. Kendrick's evidence, was, that he had been robbed of three bank notes, of 100l. which he had put into the drawer of a bureau, in a parlour on the first floor. On the 21st. of July last, he saw the notes in the bureau, for the last time. That there was a private passage up to his apartment, the door of which was often left on the latch.

He likewise related the trouble he had been at to trace one of the 100l. notes, as it went through many hands before it came to the bank. and by which he found out Philip Jones. Jones declares that Claxton came to him to the horse fair in Reading, and said he wanted to buy a horse or two, and he went with Claxton to the George, and there he saw Cox, who bid Claxton buy for him; Claxton went and bought a horse and a grey mare, of Mr. Guy, who changed the note. that by the order of Claxton he rode the horse to London, and that he saw Cox at Claxton's house after he came to town,



It appeared that Mr. Kendrick (who is a capital dealer in horses, and serves the french king and the principal nobility of France) had sustained the loss of the above mentioned sum; but it did not appear that his lodgings had been broke open, or even that the locks of his bureau had been forced.

One of the cashiers of the bank producing a bank note in court, it was handed to Mr. Kendrick, the witness, who declared that from his recollection of the figure of 3, with the other figures that were marked on the back of it, was one of the notes of which he had been robbed.

Claxton (who was supposed to be an accomplice in the robbery) gave evidence as follows: I have known Cox between two or three years; I think it was yesterday was seven weeks (I am no scholar) I was at the three Tuns, in New-street, Shoe-lane, by where I work; I saw Cox going by; he had been there before with me; I spoke to him; he asked me if I would go to Bristol along with him; he had asked me to do that before; I said it would be very expensive to go there, and I could not very well afford it he said if you will go I will pay your expences; I said it would be very dear; he said he would have a post chaise; I agreed to go with him; he said he had got a 100l. bank note; he took it out and gave it me into my hands; I agreed to go, I think, as the next day, I kept the note in my custody; we set out next day, and went from the white Horse in or near Gray's-inn-lane, it was about six in the afternoon that he came, on a Friday; we went from the White Horse in a post chaise to Onslow; we set out about three o'clock in the afternoon; from thence we went to Maidenhead; we got to Reading the next morning between ten and eleven o'clock; we intended to stop there seeing a fair there we proposed to buy horses; Cox said he was going to Bristol to see his uncle. We put up at the George at Reading, sitting in the parlour I said to Cox. here is a horse I believe; I asked the man belonging to the Inn, whether there

there was not a fair ; he said there would be on monday ; I went out and saw one Phil. Jones there ; I gave him 6d. to drink ; I said you are a Judge of a horse, if you can buy one or two worth the money, buy them ; he said he would as soon lay out his money in horses as any thing else, if bought worth the money ; Phil. Jones came and said he had got a little horse and a grey mare. and came and took me to look at them ; I went to Mr. Guy, and gave him a 100l. note for them : I gave the change to Cox ; I left Jones to bring the horses.

The following witnesses, viz. Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Collier, George Devon (one of Mr. Child's clerks) William Latmore, William Gardner (a cashier of the bank) Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Knapp, Mr. White, Mr. Guy, Philip Jones, all mentioned in Mr. Kendrick's evidence swore to the several particulars which he affirmed they had transacted.

John Morgan : I am a constable ; when Cox was taken up : I was sent for to the Blue Boar Inn, in Holborn ; the man put this warrant into my hand, and desir'd me to search his lodgings ; I knew where he lodged, at his uncle's, just in the neighbourhood, a room up one pair of stairs, it was the old man's room, but he used to make it his home. I found these six notes upon his uncle, two of them are in the name of Claxton.

#### COX' s      D E F E N C E.

My Lord, on the 23d. of July last, I came to Mr. Claxton's house ; he asked me to sit down and have some breakfast, he said he was going to a sale, to buy some trunks, I was to have one for 15s. he had bought some ; I sat down a little while, at last he asked me whether I would go down with him as far as Reading ? I said yes. I said I did not know how to go, because I wanted to be at home ; he said he wanted to go down to buy a couple of horses ; I said if he saw ever a one that would suit me to buy one, and I would pay him when he came to town, for I had but five guineas about me ;

me; he bought a little poney; I rode up to town upon it when I came up to town I gave him eight guineas for a little grey mare. I had not the tool. note, I never saw it; he did not shew it to me.

On Friday, the 20th of August, William Cox was indicted at the sessions of the peace, held at Justice Hall in the Old Bailey, when a full hearing of the above circumstance, the jury withdrew, and about ten minutes returning, brought in their verdict, Guilty. DEATH.

William Cox, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cox, of Holywell-lane Shoreditch, had the peculiar misfortune to be trained in the ways of thieving, almost from his infancy: and his abilities were of that kind which rather tended to make him crafty than wise. Cox, the father, (by trade a ribbon-weaver) being convicted of some felonious practices, received sentence of transportation, and is probably still living, though in ignominious slavery, the mother of our young culprit is alive, and bears the character of an honest woman; and in fact, she is the only honest woman of the family. The character of his uncle West, who was apprehended with him for this last offence, is sufficiently known, and Cox has a brother, now about twelve years of age, who is what the vulgar call a knowing kiddy, and another brother, not long since deceased, bore no better character.

The first robbery that ever young Cox committed was in company with his father, and it was perpetrated in the following manner: The father and son, who was then a very little boy, were walking through Grosvenor-street, when the old man, observing a silver tankard standing in a window, attempted to steal it; but the railing before the house preventing his reaching it, he hoisted the child over the rails, who easily took the tankard out of the window and gave it to his father, who lifted him back into the street. Thus was this child initiated into the mysteries of iniquity, at a time of life when he was hardly able to distinguish on the propriety or impropriety of his own conduct; and whose numerous  
and



and extraordinary escapes from the hand of justice, have only served to harden a mind not impressed with a sense of impending danger, or illumined with the rays of virtue.

Immediately after Cox's first adventure with his father, he commenced pickpocket, and soon became the most dextrous of his profession. In process of time, he was so very expert at his business, that it has been a common custom in several publick houses which he frequented, in the neighbourhood of clarkenwell, to lay wagers that he should pick the pocket of any person in company of his watch, without that person's knowledge, though the party was previously on his guard. In this case, young Cox and the party used to walk backward and forward in the room, conversing on indifferent subjects and Cox never failed to win the wager, by picking the pocket, notwithstanding all the precaution of the other.

He would likewise often pick the pockets of his acquaintances in meer jest, only to shew his dexterity; but he constantly returned the property so obtained.

It is affirmed by those who are well acquainted with his circumstances, that he has in the course of his practices stolen more then ten thousand pounds for his own share; and that he had several hundred pounds in the stock; but used such caution as not to appear as his property. But perhaps it will be asked what he did with this money? But who ever considers the many times he has been tried for his offences, and has as often been obliged to see council to bring him off, and his manner of living while in prison, and the little money a thief gets for what he sells, will not be at a loss to account for the diminution of so large a capital.

About seven years ago when he was confined in clarkenwell Bridewell, on a charge of picking of pockets, he was ragged and wretched beyond all description, and his whole body one perfect scene of vermin; but of late years he has been dressed rather in a gay stile, and has been remarkably neat and decent in his appearance.

One exploit was at Homerton; passing along thro' that village, he espied thro' the window of a gentleman's house, a servant laying the cloth in a back parlour; Cox, watching his opportunity in the absence of the servant, got through the window into the parlour and carried off all the plate from the side board undiscovered, tho' the family were then walking in the garden, which fronted this room.

About four years ago, going down Water-lane, he stepped into a stationer's shop, and asked for the beggar's opera, which he said was for his sister. The gentlewoman of the house went up stairs for the play, and while she was gone, Cox filched a silver spoon. The spoon was soon missed, and upon enquiry, one of the children said, "He saw little master (meaning Cox) at play with it."

While he was walking thro' Hanover-street, he observed a window of a house open, and being previously provided with a tame sparrow, he let it fly into the house, and the door being open, he went in as to seek for it. It chanced that there was only an old lady in the house, whom hearing, he took refuge in the area; after having filled his pockets with spoons, salts, and other Plate. Upon the Lady discovering him there, he burst into tears, and begged she would give him his sparrow, as his mother would beat him if he went Home without it. The Lady complied, and the young rascal decamped with his booty.

He once went to the castle, a public-house near Shore-litch-church, under pretence of enquiring for a Mrs. Robinson, a laundress who lodged there; he easily gained admittance, and Mrs. Robinson not being at home, he secreted and carried off plate to the amount of 14l.

While some dust-men were loading a cart in Hanover-square, he got unperceived into the house and stole some linen and a watch, and two silver candlesticks. For this offence he was afterwards apprehended, and carried before Mr. John Fielding, who asking him what he had done with the effects, he answered, "If I had got them, I should have have

"made broth of them before now, and I dare say they are  
"bould down by this time.

At another time he got into the house of a corn-chandler, in Fenchurch-street, and stole four bank notes of twenty pounds each, and all the money in the till.

One day walking up Bagnio-Court Newgate-Street, seeing a door open, he with his usual freedom, went in and being got into a back room, he was so long in searching for booty, that the gentlemen of the house surpris'd him before he was aware, and demanded his business. Cox answered, that he wanted to speak with his servant. But it very unluckily happened, that the Gentleman at that time had no servant; and from this circumstance suspected that he had no good design in hand, laid hold of him and was going to take him before a magistrate; but a gentleman coming in just at that time, was so struck with Cox's boyish appearance, that he interposed in his behalf, and pleaded so effectually for him, that the master of the house was prevail'd on to release him.

Cox was remarkable for a presence of mind, by which he extricated himself from the greatest difficulties, he took particular notice of a house in which he understood, by enquiry, were several lodgers in the house. He found means to introduce himself by the Door, which happen'd to be left ajar; and going up stairs, at the landing place, on the first floor, he met an elderly lady, whom he readily accosted with "Your servant ma'am." To which she as readily returned. "Your Servant Sir." Then mounting up to the second story, he found a door open, went in, and seeing a gold watch at the bed's head, took it. In returning down stairs, he met the same lady again, and the same compliments pass'd between them as before, and he went away unsuspected, the Lady soon after, he was gone going up to her room, missed her watch, and imagining that some of her lodgers had play'd the wag with it, she in good humour tax'd them with it; but they all seriously denying that they knew



knew any thing of the matter, she at last found to her cost, that the supposed jest was neither better or worse than a downright robbery.

Every boyish trick he could invent, was used as an artifice to help forward the perpetration of his crimes. At one time, he got playing at peg top with a gentleman's son before the door of his father's house, at Stoke Newington, and while the youth was intent on his game, Cox went into the house and stole a silver pint mug, and six spoons.

On a Sunday, about two years ago, he watched a gentleman's family out of their house in Grosvenor-street, then got into the House, stole plate to the amount of fifty pound which he carried into Oxford-street, where he took a coach and conveyed them to his Lodgings.

As he had a very boyish appearance, he used frequently to make use of that circumstance to get his ends, it has been no uncommon practice with him, to play at marbles with young Gentlemen before the door of their parents houses, and to watch the first opportunity of running in and committing a robbery.

Another scene of action he exhibited at a Gentleman's house in Montague-street, Spital-fields, having got very privily into the House, and finding a considerable quantity of plate, he packed it up and being got about half way down stairs with it, his footslipping he fell to the Bottom. The noise occasioned by his falling alarming the family, he was immediately seized, taken before a justice and committed: and at the next session, at the Old Bailey, an indictment was preferred against him, which the grand jury returned Ignoramus.

At wantstead in Essex, every Easter, the Gentry in that neighbourhood, have what they call the ladies or Easter hunt, Cox and his companions went thither, not so much to partake of the diversion, as to do the business of their own proper vocation. Cox observing a house where the family were all eagerly intent on viewing the sport, and the door ajar, he slipped in unperceiv'd, and made a prize of a  
pepper-

pepper-caster, a pair of salts, a set of tea spoons, and a tobacco-box (all of silver) which he took away unobserved; and instantly remounting, joined the company, who were just setting off in pursuit of a stag. While they were on the chase, Cox finding the saddle girths loose, alighted to tighten them. But this incident might have proved of fatal consequence to him; for in remounting, one of the salts flew out of his pocket. Though this was observed by several persons that were riding by him, yet, that he might not seem concerned for the accident, he carelessly took up the salt, replaced it in his pocket, mounted and rejoined the company.

At the late grand review of the Navy, at Portsmouth, a multitude of people resorted from all parts, to gratify their curiosity, in seeing so uncommon a shew. But the presence of a great number of the nobility, and persons of the first distinction, gentlemen and ladies, shone with peculiar lustre and brilliancy, and added grandeur to the festivity of the occasion.

Cox, we may be sure, would not miss so fair an opportunity of exerting his abilities, in the exercise of his proper profession. For this purpose, he dressed himself in the habit of a midshipman, and in that disguise introduced himself into the best sort of company; and his artful management, made so good use of his time, as to bring off to the value of upwards of 300l. in watches, jewels, and other valuable commodities.

At Upper Holloway, Cox observing a door stand open, he slipped into the house, and stole silver spoons and linen to a considerable amount.

A woollen draper's shop in Black-friars was some time ago robbed of seventy-six yards of broad cloath and thought the thief was never brought to justice. Cox's companions well knew that he was the perpetrator of the robbery.

Cox at one time, entered and robbed a chandler's shop on Saffron-hill, by means of a false key which would open almost any lock, having no wards, but only a kind of catcher.



By means of a false key of this kind, our hero got into a house in King-street, Wapping, whence he conveyed off linen and plate to a considerable amount—by the same means he likewise procured admittance in Gunstreet, Spital-fields, and robbed the house of silver spoons, salts and other plate.

It has been a frequent custom with him to procure admission into houses by obtaining the names of the children of the family, learning where they were at boarding-school, and pretending to be their school-fellow. This bait commonly succeeded admirably well, as he rarely left the house without bringing off a valuable booty; and the people of the house seldom suspected the young gentleman's tale till it was too late to detect the thief.

As he was passing thro' Cheapside, pretty early one morning, observing a journeyman taking down the shutters of a shop, he slipped in by him, and laid himself down in a corner, where he thought himself sufficiently concealed; but being discovered by a little errand boy—belonging to the shop, Cox instantly cried whoop; and on the boy's coming up to him, Cox caught hold of his arm, and at the same instant cried out, it is your turn to hide now, by which he would have it believed, he was playing at the children's old game of whoop and hide, and that he had mistaken the errand boy for one of his play-fellows. Cox's quick turn of wit on this occasion, served him so well, that the people in the shop had no suspicion of his being a counterfeiter, but let him go quietly away, without any farther inquiry into the real cause of his concealment there.

One evening, not long since, he secreted himself in the house of an eminent linen-draper, not far from Ludgate-hill: he concealed himself in the cellar, and in the middle of the night opened the door with a pick-lock key, and carried away a parcel of superfine linen worth 100l.

At another time, having got the name of a lady in Soho-square who dealt with a chamber miliner in Tottenham-court Road, he went thither under pretence of bespeaking a set of ruffles for the lady but when there, he found means to conceal himself so well in the chamber, that he made a bundle of some fine linen and laces, some tea-spoons, a silver handled knife and fork, and a few trinkets,



*bets, with which he was marching off, when hearing somebody coming along the passage, he had no way to escape being taken but by creeping under the bed, where he lay snug with his bundle for several hours, but at last got off with it, though with no small difficulty and hazard.*

At one time, Cox and the famous Darts, the fighter, were making bets at the Black Raven in Fetter-Lane, where Cox found means to sweep off all the cash, with which he made his escape.

A girl who was kept by Cox used to make a frequent practice of pledging some trifles, at the pawn broker's; in a short time she would go to redeem her pledge, and our hero used to attend her. While the pawn broker was gone up stairs for the effects, Cox used to take the opportunity of examining the shop, and seldom failed of carrying off goods to the amount of twenty times the value of the things which the lady came to redeem.

Cox, at one time, by means of a false key obtaining entrance into a house in Seacoal-lane; near snow hill, which he robbed of linen to a considerable amount, and conveyed away undetected.

Being one day at a house in Islington, he stole a watch but before he could carry it off, he was seiz'd with it in his hand. Being in this woeful situation and the people threatening to take him before a justice, he burst out into a flood of tears, and protesting he took it only to see weather it was time for him to go to school, his boyish look and counterfeit simplicity, so wrought on their credulity, that they let hem go without any further examination.

Mr. Cox had an adventure at paddington, which at the same time that it shows with how much artifice he could act, proves also that his simplicity of conduct was the most exquisite part of that artifice. He was playing according to his frequent custom, with some children at the door of a gentleman's house—the children were called to dinner—our hero, equally brave and cautious, staid 'till the dinner was ended; then renewed his play with the young Gentle-  
men,

men, and while the youths were engaged in play, he slipped into the house, and stole a very large quantity of plate.

Some few years ago, a man and a woman who had positively sworn against Cox before a justice of peace, swore as positively in his Favour at the Old Bailey, for the consideration of three guineas; nor is this the only instance in which Cox has found the money which he had acquired by dishonest means, serviceable in the extricating himself from those difficulties in which the illegal thirst of that gain had involved him.

One day, as Cox was passing by the house of a noted linen draper, and seeing the door open, he slipped up stairs, but on the first landing place met the draper's wife, as she was coming out of the dining room. This accident, however, did not in the least disconcert him; for the moment he saw her, he asked whether Mrs. Robinson did not lodge in the house? and being answered in the negative, he begged pardon and retired. Not long after, going by the same house, he saw the draper's wife go out, when he again got in and finding in the laundry some very finelinen, worth about 20*l*. he tied it up in a handkerchief, and carried it safe out of the house; but just as he had got out at the private door, he saw the draper coming out at his shop door: and observing that he walked after him, imagined that he had a mind to stop him with his bundle; upon which, he steps away as fast as he could; and seeing two boys at play together, he went to them, and offered to sell them a small top, which he took out of his pocket, but the boys refusing to buy it, "Well then (said he) I'll keep it myself." The draper meeting with a friend, spent just as much time in conversation with him, as Cox had spent in talking to the boys; so that on leaving them, he observed the draper following, though at some distance. Just by him was a stable yard, where lived a woman with whom Cox's aunt had formerly lodged; of her he enquired for his aunt, but the woman told him, she did not know where his aunt then lived. He then desired he might leave his bundle with her, till he could call for it: but she well knowing his character, flatly refused to take care of it. Cox then left her, and as he was coming away, saw the draper go into a stable opposite to him; upon which he got into the street as fast as he could, and so escaped that bout.



Our hero, like other people in polite life, kept a monkey, of which he was not a little fond. This animal he used to keep tied in such a situation, that when he descended for food, he could not recover his former station but with the best help of his claws. It was Cox's peculiar pride and pleasure to give this monkey apples and other fruit, till his paws were so loaded that he could not regain the place he had left, and then he enjoyed the highest satisfaction from the distress to which the poor animal was reduced.

Cox, though very wary and cunning in managing and carrying on his enterprises, yet in some of them he sadly miscarried. In the neighbourhood of the above-mentioned linen draper, lived a tailor of some note, Cox watching his opportunity, got into the house, and going up stairs, on the second floor opened the door of a room, when to his no small mortification, he saw the master sitting at his business; however, soon recovering himself, he asked whether the foreman was within. the Tailor recollecting the description which the Draper had given of the person who had robbed him, concluded that Cox was the same rogue, and therefore replied, " Yes the foreman is within, but you did not expect to find him in this room." and directly seized him, and sending for the linen draper, who committed him to the Compter. It was not long before the sessions came on at the Old Baily, when he was tried for the robbery; but the draper not being able to swear to the identity of his person, he was acquitted. On his second examination before the Lord Mayor on this occasion, he asked the prosecutor what he intended to do in this matter? the draper answered " his Intent was to transport him," Cox replied, he may be d—d, do your best and put your worst in your pocket.

Three weeks before Cox's last apprehension, he stole a large quantity of linen; but a prosecution was prevented, and the whole affair adjusted, thro the diligence and interest of a woman who keeps a public-house in Rag-street, Clerkenwell, a house much frequented by Cox and his companions.

At a house in Bishopsgate-street, Cox, in company with a man who calls himself captain Davies, and who has been since



since capitally convicted, but reprieved and transported, robbed a Gentleman of as much plate as one man could carry.

These two worthies having thus joined their forces, they made their attack on a pawn-broker, at Chelsea. Their pretence was to buy some particular thing's he had to sell. While the broker was gone to another room to look for the articles they wanted they shut the door upon him, and made it so fast that he could by no means open it. Mean while, they packed all the valuable effects they could find. The pawn-broker in vain endeavouring to force open the door, at last discharged a pistol thro' it, the ball of which took away the corner of the captain's hat. But this did not terrify them so much as to prevent their carrying off goods to the amount of 100l. and upwards.

At another time, they paid a visit together to an apothecary at Hoxton. Here they assumed new characters; Davis was the gentleman and Cox the servant; the former desired to have the apothecary's advice, about a certain disorder, which he said was very painful and troublesome. While Davis and the doctor were discoursing over the matter in a private room, Cox was busy in his trade of filching, which he did with such success, as to pocket a silver pint mug, and a couple of table-spoons, with which they marched away undiscovered.

About twenty months since, Cox and Davis agreed on a robbery near Bow; when Cox, though not present at the perpetration of the crime, received his full share of the booty. This seems to prove the truth of the old observation, that, "There is Honour among Thieves."

In a robbery they committed together in the house of a counsellor near Bloomsbury-square, Davis was again master, and Cox his servant. Davis pretended he came with a message from an attorney in the country, about a particular affair. The counsellor was at breakfast, and very politely asked him to drink a dish of Coffee. Breakfast being over, Davis delivered his sham message, and then with-drew. Meanwhile his man Cox had laid hold of a gold watch, a silver saucepan, and a pair of pistols richly mounted, and carried them clear off.

It was

It was a frequent custom with Cox and a companion to go at midnight, with a number of false keys, with which they used to try the locks of various houses :—When a lock was found which any of their keys would open, they used to remark the particular house, to which they would go on the following day, and if they could watch the family out, Cox would unlock the door of the house, deliver his keys to his companion, and then go in and strip the premises of such valuable articles as he could lay his hands on.

From the house of a foreign gentleman in Soho-square, Captain Davis and Cox stole plate, fine linen and silk gowns to a considerable amount.—As soon as this Robbery was committed, Davis was stopped in the house ; but he found means to make his escape.

At Rotherhithe, the confederates Davis and Cox, took down the shutter of a house, and having broke the window got in and stole silk gowns, cardinals, silver spoons and other valuable articles, with which they escaped undiscovered.

These two bretheren in iniquity, Cox and Davis, going thro' St. Paul's Church-yard together, went into a shop of an eminent silversmith and toyman, pretended they wanted to buy a diamond ring. While the silversmith was looking over his drawers Cox had the dexterity to secrete a pearl necklace, and some other articles of great value.

One night they supped together in Leicester-fields after supper, Davis smoaked his pipe over a bottle of wine. In the mean time, Cox, who on such occasions was never idle, went in a seemingly careless manner about the house, and passing from one room to another, at last got into a room where lay a parcel of hats and other goods for exportation ; but Cox saved the owner that trouble, and carried them off himself.

Captain Davis and Cox having enterred the shop of a hosier and haberdasher in westminster, took the advantage of the master's back being turned, to rob the shop of silk stockings and ribbons to a considerable value.

This culprit was tried by Mr. Baron Eyre, who was Recorder of London at the time when Cox had been heretofore tried, and narrowly escaped, and who has repeatedly and pathetically  
C advised

*advised him to reform his conduct, and not to subject himself to equal disgrace and danger in future.*

*While Cox was in Clerkenwell Bridewell, he was so averse to being made a public shew of, that he would not admit any but his particular acquaintances to be introduced to him.*

*He has been, at all times, remarkably sober and abstemious from liquors; and if at any time, his company have prevailed on him to drink more than it was his custom to do, the moment that he found that the liquor began to operate to his disadvantage he never failed to order a coach and retire to his lodgings.*

*A quickness of wit, a ready apprehension, and a steady presence of mind, scarce ever failed him in the greatest emergencies: qualities, had they been employed in a better cause, would have entiled the possessor to the applause of every friend to ingenuity and laudable science.*

*He generally used to carry a considerable sum of money about him, and when he called at any of the houses which he frequented, he would drink a small glass of any liquor that was at hand, and constantly paid a shilling for it.*

*He used, when among thieves of the petty kind, to boast that he had a soul above descending to the meanness of filching the brass knocker from the house, or the scraper from the street door.*

*Of late years, he kept a little Black mare, on which he used to ride to all the races within a moderate distance from London, where he was generally a great and a successful gambler.*

*The common toast given by this offender, was "a health to all thieves."*

*Our adventurer was always of opinion that he should never commit any crime, the punishment of which would amount to any thing more than transportation: and his being convicted for the robbery of Mr. Kendrick, was certainly a circumstance beyond the utmost stretch of his imagination to have conceived possible.*

Among



Among his comrades and associates, he was called by the nick name of YOUNG SIR JOHN, as being more eminent in his profession than any of his brethren in Iniquity.

It is a distinguishing mark in the character of our hero, that though he kept a horse he never committed a highway robbery, nor ever made any depredations on the houses in the neighbourhood in which he lived.

It was one of Cox's most singular pleasures, and which shews his warm attachment to the sex, to see his mistress elegantly dressed, this favourite of our hero's was no other than the renowned Sally Claxton sufficiently famous for being sister to Claxton the evidence against Cox in the matter for which he was sentenced to die; but more celebrated for being a notorious shop-lifter, and the chosen partner of the most ingenious and admirable thief in his Majesty's dominions.

Being told that the gallows would be his certain fate, he answered, "My only wish is a strong rope, and a good Jack Ketch when I come there." Adding, "Well, as I go up Holbourn, I will have a look at the fix cans.

At the same time, a person telling him, that as he was cast only on circumstances, he might possibly get off; "Yes said he, "at the End of a rope."

During his imprisonment some pious persons sent him a letter with advice and exhortation how to demean himself, in his unhappy situation: On opening the Book, he cried out, in his usual style, "What's all this gammon about?"

On looking thro' the gate of the prels yard, and observing that the man who turns the key took money of the people to let them in, he exclaimed with an oath, "That fellow gets more money by making a shew of me, then ever I did by thieving."

Seeing a very lusty woman coming out of curiosity to see him, he said, "D——n the b——ch, she is come to take me off, but she shall be disappointed," and, at the same time, spreading the coat of a person who stood

before him, hid himself behind it ; but finding the woman's curiosity continued, and that seemed resolved to see him, he in the most shocking language (too horrid to repeat) forced her to depart.

To shew what abandoned kind of company visit the poor wretches under sentence of death, we will relate an occurrence which happen'd—A fellow, accosted Cox, with a "never mind it, Billy—you'll escape the night-cap—you'll come through this bout."—"Yes (replied Cox) I shall come thro at the gallows."

He was daily visited by a number of those unhappy woman, to whose seducing artifice, but too many youths have fallen a sacrifice.

A person asking where Francis Talbot (another unhappy convict) was?—Cox replied that he was at prayers—The Turnkey of Newgate, then, with a concern and an emphasis of expression that does him great honour, stepped forward, and said to Cox, And do you never Pray to?—No (replied our hero) never till after dinner."

At this juncture, a woman advanced to the gate, and said, "Bill Cox what can you eat for dinner?—could you eat a quarter of a goose?—"Can I not?—replied Cox:—"Then I have ordered it," said the woman ; on which Cox immediately ordered a bottle of red port.

The sermon preached before the condemned prisoners on the Sunday, previous to their execution, was so moving as to draw tears from all persons excepting Cox ; which he observing, said, " What I suppose you all think, because "I don't snivel and cry as you do, I am not affected." Then turning to the ladies, he made use of an indecent expression, and said, " He guessed what they cried for ; "that he would do all he could for them while living, but when dead, it would be all over with him. "

Just before his departure from Newgate, he gave Jack Ketch half a guinea to do his business well ; and his man a quarter of a guinea, to pull him by the legs while hanging because he thought his body would not be heavy enough to dispatch him, without more weight. Let

Let his fate be a warning to the young, the heedless and the extravagant ; not to engage in scenes of dissipation, which their fortunes will by no means enable them to support the expence of, nor their abilities qualify them to sustain, with any degree of that reputation, which even the vicious themselves would wish to obtain.

In his passage to execution, his behaviour (mistaken by many for hardened and impertinent, as one of the daily papers take notice) was very manly and resigned, without over-acting his part : he died with the most amazing fortitude and intrepidity which astonished every beholder. Just before he was turned off, Mr. Toll, the minister (to whose piety and tender care for their souls, the prisoners were very much indebted) with a loud and distinct voice acquainted the spectators,—That William Cox begged their prayers; that he owned he committed the fact for which he was going to suffer, and hoped that God would receive his soul. The two sheriffs and under-sheriff attended at the execution, where they were allowed an hour and a half for their devotion, a circumstance not remembered for a great many years past.

Cox during his passage to Tyburn, held an orange in his hand, and seemed very serious and composed.

It is supposed, there never was such a concourse of people between Newgate and Tybourn, as were assembled on this occasion. Cox was the object of the general attention and so anxious were the populace to get a sight of this extraordinary culprit that many persons were thrown down and trampled under foot.

Having thus brought this uncommon Malefactor to his last exit, as a conclusion to this narrative I shall only add, that he was under twenty years of age at his death ; had been tried seventeen times at the Old Bailey ; and that, on his first trial, they were obliged to put him on a stool, by reason of the shortness of his stature, otherwise he could not have been seen by the witness and jury.

This



This narrative is for the service of that part of the public which has been essentially injured by his artifice ; and may tend to guard the honest and the careless in the protection of their property ; and to warn the young, the thoughtless and the extravagant, that it is only by a steady perseverance in the paths of virtue, that they can hope to escape the most shocking ignominy in this life, and the most consummate misery in future.

When one reads over the trials at every sessions in the Old Bailey, held eight times a year, and takes into that account, the numerous convictions, at the assizes held twice a year in every county throughout the kingdom, the number of criminals and the variety of felonies and offences with which they are charged, and of which most of them are convicted, one cannot but stand amazed, that human nature should be capable of such enormities, especially, if we carry our speculation farther, and consider men as a rational being, furnished with powers and faculties, that enable him to distinguish right from wrong good from evil, injustice from justice vice from virtue ; that he has a monitor in his breast, which frequently admonishes him of the heinousness of his crimes, at the very instant he is committing them, and of the sad consequences that will inevitably follow a detection ; and at the same time, he knows he is breaking down the barriers of justice, and exposing honesty, integrity, and unguarded innocence, to the depredations of a villian ; I say when such circumstances are duly attended to, what melancholy reflections must they occasion in a serious mind ? A man can hardly forbear wishing himself of another species, and sorry he is connected, in nature, with such a profligate race of mortals.

It is a reflection, no less true than melancholy, that not in one case in a hundred the humane feelings of a prosecutor, the mercy of a court of justice, or the tenderness of a jury, operate to the advantage of the culprit. The young offender encouraged by his companions, and vitiated in principle by the force of evil example, generally proceeds from

from the commission of a smaller crime to the perpetration of a greater, 'till the violated laws of his country, doom him a victim to the injuries they have sustained. In this case, the greater number receive that mercy from the benevolent hands of the Sovereign, which is equally to be applauded and regretted. Transportation, intended as a favour, usually terminates in a punishment. Of the great numbers thus ignominiously detached from their native country, many, by pursuing their pestiferous occupations, fall victims to the laws of those colonies to which they are sent, others end a wretched life through the change of the climate, the inclemencies of the seas, or the peculiar disagreeableness of their situation as transports; and of the young and healthy, many remain slaves to the masters who purchase them, and the rest prematurely returning to England, expiate with their Blood, the aggravated offences of having deserved an ignominious death, and of having forfeited a right to that renovated life, which providence, through the breast of the King had afforded them.

But through the dignity of human nature is thus debas'd and every law, civil, moral, and divine, is trampled underfoot by these miscreants; yet let it be said, for the honour of humanity; that there are many men of very different principles, whose virtues shine as lights in the firmament, who scorn a base and dishonorable action, whose lives, doings, and conduct, give a lustre to their character, and make them a blessing to their friends and neighbours, and no less so to the public in general.

It is not a little astonishing, that laws, framed with the most consummate wisdom, enacted from principles of the soundest policy, and enforced with a sagacity and strictness that does honour to the clearest heads and purest hearts, should fail of being attended with the Legislature had in view, and which the officers of justice spare not their endeavours to promote: yet so it is, that such excellent laws, though executed in the most impartial manner do frequently fail of answering those salutary purposes which they were intended for.

When

When children have not only the example of wicked and profligate parents constantly before their eyes, but are taught and initiated into all the mysteries of iniquity; can we suppose, that their future practices will not be answerable to so hopefull a beginning? What kind of progress can we expect from so wretched an outset? Will the rose grow on a bramble, or the lilly on a stalk of hemlock? And we may with as much reason imagine, that virtue will thrive and flourish in a soil where vice has been so industriously planted. Such was the sad case of this unfortunate youth who is the melancholy subject of these memories. He received the first rudiments of villainy from the bad example and pernicious instructions of his wicked father.

F I N I S.



Ex. J. M.  
10/22/12